1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

scratched like a "*tigri*"—a tiger, for this is how the Bush Negroes name the jaguar. Later, when we saw him dance the Tigri Kromanti dance, we witnessed one of the most realistic feline interpretations imaginable. But that is another matter.

Now Apanto was an obia man to be reckoned with, and his fellow villagers and the villagers of neighboring settlements treated him with a deference that his age alone could never have commanded. And it was this Apanto who now came up and said that he would sing the sacred Kromanti songs for our phonograph.

"You will not understand the songs. They will be in the Kromanti language," he warned us. "They are strong, and the machine must be strong to carry them."

It happens that a field phonograph is anything but strong. The mechanism is simple, since the instrument must be light enough to be carried about, and yet it often is subjected to all manner of hard usage. To this is added the hazard of the climate. The turntable is actuated by a belt running from the mechanism inside the case, and the ends of this belt are glued together. This, to be sure, we discovered later. At the moment, we met Apanto's challenge with assurance. We did not doubt that the machine was spiritually strong.

What he said about the Kromanti language was true. The Kromanti tongo, of which we had been told during our first visit here, we were finding to be an actuality, and although we took down the words as he sang them, aided in hearing them by the repetitions, their meaning was unknown to us. Some of them we learned later. Some of them we knew. "Obia" we knew concerned the spirit, the vague force known by that name, while "Amba" was a deity sacred to Saturday, and was given as a "day name" to women born on that day of the week. This, then, is what he sang:

"*Ma djeni ye-ye*
Obia kule ma djeni no-ho
Obia mo-ye

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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us when we asked him. At one landing place where we stopped for a moment, we could hear the drums sounding the rhythm to the river gods, but the drumming stopped abruptly as word went back along the path that white people had come. Men streaked with pemba came down to the river to look at the Bakra who had visited the village of their Granman.

In the boat, we missed Bayo. The grandson of the Granman, who was our bow paddler, we had met but casually before we had started. There had been none of the chances for conversation that had made of Bayo a friend before he and his great-grandfather came to take us to the country of the Granman. Later we would come to know this youth for a pleasant young man, capable and quiet, who was proud to show his ability, and quick to resent the suggestions of our town man in such matters as making a shelter for the night.

"We are children of the bush!" the young man exclaimed sharply. "We know how to make this." And such a good shelter did the paddlers build that men of a near-by village, who passed, stopped and asked that it not be torn down the next morning, as had to be done with shelters erected for the night on the land of a strange clan, but that we should let it stand so that others might use it.

When we asked him questions, however, or made observations on people who passed by in their canoes, he gave us noncommittal replies. Mataibo, the captain of our boat, was even more reserved, though he liked to twit our town man, and in an unofficial capacity would have been amusing. Conversation between the two paddlers, or between them and the two young men who were entrusted with our other boat, was in the clipped, rapid "deep-Saramacca" speech which, in spite of our use of it in conversation at the Granman's village, we still found it difficult to follow when Bush Negroes spoke informally to one another.

As the day wore on, we began to get used to the rapidity with which village after village was passed. Here was the landing place of the one where we had stopped so that

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GLOSSARY AND LINGUISTIC NOTES

THE language of the Saramacca Bush Negroes is called by them the *Saramacca tongo*—the Saramacca tongue. Though there are many African words in ritual and everyday speech, the Saramacca tongo is essentially Negro-Portuguese, with a sprinkling of English and Dutch words. In the city of Paramaribo the Negroes speak *taki-taki*, Negro-English, though Dutch and Portuguese words are also found. The structure of the language of both bush and coastal Negroes is essentially African, that is to say, in all the borrowings it was the word which was borrowed, while the African idiom was retained, so that it may be said that the Negroes speak African dialects translated into English or Portuguese or Dutch. Simple examples of this are such phrases as "carry come" for "bring"; "carry go" for "take away"; or "hunger kills me" for "I am hungry"; or "one time" for "immediately."

For the correspondences between the languages of the Suriname Negroes and of West Africa, we have relied on various dictionaries and grammars of West African languages, and on our own findings made during our field work on the West African coast. In writing the words of Suriname and West African languages in both the glossary and the body of this book, the vowels have the "continental" values, not those given in English. It is to be noted that diacritical marks which would be necessary to indicate the strong nasalization that characterizes Bush Negro speech have been omitted from both text and glossary, in order to simplify the writing of native terms. Finally, we must

[P. 344 is blank]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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Aucaner
Saramaccaner
Boni

619 In general appearance and culture the Aucaners vary little
184 from the other large tribe, the Saramaccaners.

[531] The art motifs and their treatment as displayed on the Aucaner wood carvings as a rule differ from those of the Saramaccaners. On the other hand, some of the pieces were found to be practically identical.

The Aucaner talkee-talkee also differs from that of the Saramaccaners, the former being more like the speech of the
[197 Town Negroes. The Aucaners have no deepee-talkee or odo
198] as have the Saramaccaners, but they have a dialect known as
191] *Koropina* where a *p* or an *m* is spoken before the vowels in a word for the purpose of confusing strangers. A similar custom is prevalent among the Negroes of Curaçao, Dutch West Indies.

[291] The dress of the Aucaners is the same as that of the Saramaccaners, excepting that they affect more often the breast-cloth, the *wassapangye,* and the head-cloth, the *mussu.*

Among the Aucaners the toga garment is called the *yembah,* while it is called a camissa by the Saramaccaners. The barrier of palm leaves is called *chifunga* by the Aucaners and *azang pau* by the Saramaccaners.

[262 The system of food taboos and general culture are the
606 same. There is no mother-in-law taboo among either the
194] Aucaners or the Saramaccaner tribe.

[161] The Boni tribe, which consists of about 900 people, is de-
648 scended from escaped slaves who crossed the Marowyne River into French Guiana and who were allowed to remain there unmolested by the French authorities. This is the only

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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Bonis

Although the huts are of Africanesque architecture, similar 342
to those of the Aucaner tribe, there is, at times, more wooden board in the construction and less thatch.

During the expedition of 1928 we were informed that the 316
Bonis, particularly at the village of Apatoo, were conversant 326
with the old West African method of smelting iron and manufacturing it into implements of various kinds. This claim proved to be entirely groundless. If there is any iron ore in the neighbourhood, these tribesmen do not know where it is, and most certainly do not understand how to smelt it.

It was in Africa that the art of iron working is supposed to have originated, and the iron work of West Africa, whence the Djukas came, is a thing of beauty. But the Djukas have lost this hereditary art. Among the Bonis, the work in metal seems to be limited to the soldering of copper French coins to bracelets made of iron or copper pipe, which they procure by trade or from the machinery of long abandoned French gold exploitations. They also make brass bracelets and anklets of considerable width out of brass piping obtained from a similar source. The piping is split with the sharp blade of an axe and hammered into shape with the blunt end. We were able to obtain a stiletto with an iron blade and a handle of brass riveted to it with copper, but we are under the impression that the blade, at least, is of French or Italian manufacture.

In their general habits as regards hunting, fishing, agri- 184
culture, canoe building, social customs and structure, dress, 619
and so on, the Bonis are quite similar to the Aucaners. They speak a dialect of talkee-talkee which has distinct differences [191
from the Aucaner and the Saramaccaner in that it contains a 197] ●
good deal of French patois.

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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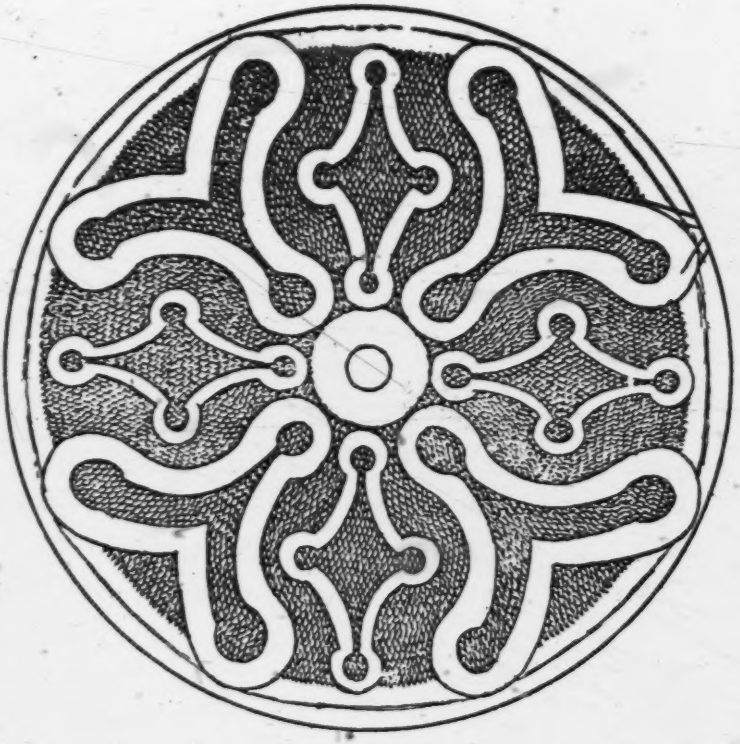
532]



Chapter Ten

DJÚKA TALK

THE Bush Negroes have two languages. The ordinary tongue, phrases from which are scattered throughout this book, is known as talkee-talkee. It is the common *lingua franca* of the entire colony, used not only by the Djukas, but also by some of the Indians and by the Town Negroes of

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A [For caption, see category 116, p. 204. - Analyst]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

Paramaribo. Outside the boundaries of Dutch Guiana it is unknown.

Talkee-talkee is a pure-vowelled pidgin language, as picturesque as the countryside itself. Its vocabulary is drawn from many tongues, although English and Dutch words preponderate. The Dutch words are either vestiges of the slave days or infiltrations from the daily speech of the present Dutch colonists. The English words may date from the British occupation of the country, which lasted, with some brief intervals, from 1630 to 1674; or they may come from the English-speaking colony on the west, brought in by British Guiana balata bleeders. As numbers of the early colonists were Jews, originally from Brazil, Spain, or Portugal, as well as from Holland, one still encounters occasional Jewish terms, like *trafer* (taboo), among the Bush Negro speech. There are also a few French words, like *bon,* which still retains its original nasalization. They come from the convict colony toward the east. A few Spanish and Portuguese words, like *balata* and *camissa,* add to the variety of tongues. And finally we recognize a certain light sprinkling of West African dialect, such as *pekein* meaning small.

When the bahkra becomes accustomed to local idioms, the learning of talkee-talkee is not difficult, and the many familiar or half-familiar phrases are of great assistance. At first glance one might expect to find the Bush Negroes speaking a language largely Dutch, but this is not the case. It is doubtful, says one commentator, whether Dutch will ever be widespread among them, because their ancestors who came from

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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Equatorial Africa were accustomed to the use of many broad, open vowels, and "no faucal gutturals or abruptly collocated consonants" (H. H. Johnson). Talkee-talkee is fluent and euphonious, with many haunting phrases and graceful involutions. The phrase that designates the spider stories, *anansi-tories,* is markedly musical; *balata bleeding,* with its succession of broad vowels, is a memorable term.

The early rebels came from many different tribes, and were thrown into contact with alien races. Some common language was a necessity; talkee-talkee is the result. But despite the importation of many foreign words, the dominating characteristic of talkee-talkee is the pure intonation of the West African tongues.

The musical effect is enhanced by the use of distinct tones, and words or phrases are often sung in a sustained pitch, in a manner made familiar to Western ears by the Chinese language. The phrase that occurs on page 45, *So matti, fie you tang,* is intoned with a rising inflection, prolonged on the last word. Sharp inflections of single words are also common, such as the word for the palate, *tu-tu.* But the musical nature of talkee-talkee is most evident when the Bush Negroes are communicating across the water. We have already described how they talk from one canoe to another, across great distances, by lowering their voices and drawing out the tones resonantly. There is still ringing in our ears the long drawn-out *Ah-e-e-e* of the boatmen, sounding across the yellow waters of the Surinam.

The individual words are strung together with very loose

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

193 The individual words are strung together with very loose grammatical construction, varying with the idiosyncrasies of the speaker. The nouns and verbs have no regular order; instead they are twisted around for convenience and emphasis. The implied meaning is usually not difficult to grasp.

We have resorted to arbitrary spellings, as the Bush Negroes possess no written language (see Appendix A), and the phonetic transcription of their speech is a task for an expert in linguistics. A few words have conventionalized forms adopted by previous writers, such as talkee-talkee, pronounced more nearly "tahki-tahki." The names of certain villages also, have a conventional spelling because they appear in the reports of the Dutch government. Examples of these are Gansee (Gan zay) and Lombe (Lom bay). Djuka is pronounced Djukah by the Aucaner.

● 197 The only difference between the Bush Negro's talkee-talkee and its use by the other natives of the colony is that the former have many words peculiar to themselves, such as the names of their gods and their implements. In addition to this common language, spoken by almost everyone in the colony, the Saramaccaners have a tribal language of their own. It is known as *deepee-talkee* (deep talk), or *odo, Saramacca tongo* or *Cromanti.*

In this language, which the Town Negroes and Indians cannot understand, is preserved a saga of the slave rebellion. It recounts the skirmishes and pitched battles, and the fate of the brave leaders who raided the plantations of the Dutch masters. It tells how they magically escaped the white man's bullets by the potency of their obeiahs. It ends with the white

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man suing for peace, and the independence of the Djukas in their forest clearings.

As odo is used whenever the Bush Negroes desire secrecy, it is often difficult for the white man to get anyone to translate it for him. That deepee-talkee varies considerably from talkee-talkee may be seen from the comparison of the following words:

	Talkee-Talkee	*Deepee-Talkee*
child	pekein	meh
cicatrizations	cutty-cutty	cumum bah'
chicken	fow	ganee'ah
knife	nee'fee	fah'kah
leaf	wee'fee	pow uh' wee

It can be seen even from these few words that talkee-talkee is a simple, childlike speech, bearing a superficial resemblance to the baby-talk of English-speaking parents. The word for chicken, *fow,* is the English word "fowl" as any small child would be likely to pronounce it. Odo, on the other hand, is a more complicated and comprehensive language.

The English derivation of most of the following talkee-talkee words is apparent:

boat: *boto*
water: *watra*
tongue: *tongo*
current: *tonga watra* (strong water)
sandy: *santi*
ground: *gron*
country: *condree*
foot: *futu*
big: *gran* (French, *grand*)

/22 cont./

123 As a White one must enjoy great confidence among them if one wants to obtain permission to witness such solemnities. Never shall I forget the spectacle when I was present at such a festival; it took place from seven o'clock in the evening until two o'clock in the morning. During all this time I found myself in a very unpleasant state of tension. Although I found myself far from the part inhabited by us (namely the town of Paramaribo) in the deep forest alone in their midst, I was nevertheless not afraid because of my positive conviction of my influence over them. I was not at ease that night, however, and were it not for the fact that I did not want to hinder them or show them that I did not feel at ease at this solemnity, I would have departed, however eager I was to see the result of the movements. I remained, however, until all had come to an end, both for the distinction that fell to me for /23/ having been allowed to be present there and in order not to offend the trust put in me, while to myself I rejoiced at being able later to give to others the description of this solemnity.

Chapter XIV

Language, Odo, and Narratives (1)

538 1. Odo, proverb; narratives are called fori, and tales anansi-tori.

• 197 Their language is the Negro English customarily spoken here, but in a singsong tone with a peculiar accent.

195 As proof that during the conversation they understand you well, they constantly repeat "Yaa!"

551 When a child is born among them, aside from a general name they also give it a day name, in which for them special meanings are concealed, for instance:

131

PHONETIC NOTATIONS AND TRANSCRIPTIONS IN FRENCH OF NAMES OF PLACES AND PERSONS

197 The Boni language, made up from deformed English words, presents few phonetic difficulties.

104 Notations. We have made use of the simplified international alphabet of the International African Institute of London (Westerman and Ward).

Vowels:

a forward a (French a of "natte").
a: long a, pronounced very far back, analogous to the one in English "half."
ã nasalized a, French an of "banc."
e French é of "périr."
ɛ French è of "grève."
ə nasalized e (In the Boni language there does not seem to be any central oral vowel).
ɛ̃ nasalized è, French in of "pince."
i long i, as in "île."
ɔ open o, like the one of "port."
o closed o, as in "obus."
ɔ̃ nasalized o, on of the French "bon."
u French ou of "poule."
ũ nasalized ou.

Consonants:

b, d, f, g, k, l, m, n, p, t, z are used with their ordinary value in French.
h, w, with their ordinary value in English.

F 233 433 /10 cont./ Since about ten years ago Creole exploiters without any outside aid have built up a herd of several hundred head, principally with an eye to the provisioning of the mining center of Benzdorp. F [508] The existence of an airodrome and regular air connections permits envisaging the export of meat to the coast. The success of animal F 233 raising in the Upper Maroni seems to be attributable to a rainfall [132] lower in total amount than on the coastal strip but better distributed, as well as to the nature of the soil. It is principally on the floodable [311] alluvial strip bordering the river to a width of 500 to 600 meters that cattle find the most favorable conditions, taking refuge on the neighboring hills during the three weeks of annual inundation.

F [461] Winning pastures from the forest and defending them against the encroachment of the bush represents continual work, but it [464] can be carried out on the Maroni far better than on the coast, thanks to the man power of the Refugee Blacks.

F [433] One cannot yet come to a conclusion on the profitableness [435] of this animal raising. Like many other enterprises in Guiana it is handicapped by its too high cost price which prevents effective competition with imported products.

B 101 2) The populations of the Maroni, descending from rebel slaves of the 18th century, who are often called Refugee Blacks, are divided into three tribes: the Djuka, the Paramaka, and the B 197 Boni, whose customs are practically identical and whose dialects are very close. These dialects are variations of Taki-taki, vehicular language derived mainly from English, whose use was widespread in the time of slavery and which has become the national language of Surinam.

B 162 131 The Paramaka, 700 to 800 in number, occupy the lower part of the course of the Maroni from the first waterfall (Hermina) to the junction with Béiman Creek. They are not navigators but B 433 464 farmers and foresters, who furnish highly prized man power for the enterprises of the Saint-Laurent region.